

## **Grants to Aid Historic Preservation**

**Monday, December 3, 2007**

**Lisa K. Heney**

**Staff Writer**

**Today's Sunbeam**

SALEM -- In order to guarantee historic preservation of specific buildings in the area, both the Salem County Historical Society and the Salem Old House Foundation have received money under the New Jersey Historic Trust Grant.

State Sen. Stephen M. Sweeney and Assemblymen John J. Burzichelli and Douglas H. Fisher, D-3rd Dist., made the announcement of the recipients earlier this week.

"The projects funded under these grants will be used to restore and preserve historic resources that will be used as educational and recreational reserves," said Sweeney in a press release. "The goal of this funding is to advance historic preservation in New Jersey through education, stewardship and financial investment programs that preserves our heritage and strengthens our communities."

The Salem County Historical Society received \$75,000 in grant money and will be used to rehabilitate the Alphonso Eakin House located on Market Street in the city. The first steps being done in the first phase of construction will be the rehabilitation of the first floor of the house.

"We want it ADA (Americans for Disabilities Act) accessible and we want to add a catering kitchen," said Tammy Barnes, executive director of the Salem County Historical Society.

The Alphonso Eakin House was given to the society in 1992 by the late Eleanor Rumsey, said Barnes. The building needs to see repairs and renovations before it can be used by the society.

"It's been sitting under-utilized for the last 15 years and with this grant we can fix it," said Barnes.

Phase one of the project will be to concentrate on the first floor of the house and then the Society will seek out further grant money in order to work on the other areas of the building. The society hopes to be able to host events and receptions with this building.

"We want to preserve one of Market Street's architectural structures," said Barnes. "The family that lived there was significant to the economic history and we want to get their story told."

As for the Salem Old House Foundation, it received \$42,027 which will go toward work at the Abel and Mary Nicholson House located in Elsinboro Township.

The Salem Old House Foundation is a non-profit organization that strives to restore, rehabilitate and preserve historic residential architecture throughout the county.

"In most cases we purchase or have donated to us residential property that we restore and often deed restrict or re-sell," said Ron Magill, president of the board of directors of the foundation. "Deed restriction limits some of the things that can be done and means the new owner cannot go in and change the exterior work done to the house."

The Abel and Mary Nicholson House was built in 1722 and serves as a national historic landmark, according to Magill. The funding for the house will be used for fire detection, prevention equipment and provide groundwater monitoring.

"The things this grant will do are protective measures to ensure the longevity of protection in this property," said Magill. "We need to stabilize the property because it is being used as a study facility as vernacular architecture in the Delaware Valley. We get visitors from universities, private organizations and schools and I'm very appreciative that the New Jersey Historic Trust would consider this project."